DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 379 CS 008 121

AUTHOR Black, Janet K.; Puckett, Margaret
TITLE Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Reading Programs. A Position Statement.
INSTITUTION Texas Association for the Education of Young Children.
PUB DATE [84]
NOTE 6p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Reading; Educational Theories; *Kindergarten; Literacy; Preschool Education; Primary Education; Reading Instruction; Reading Processes; *Reading Programs; *Reading Readiness; *Reading Research; Reading Skills; Teaching Methods; Writing Instruction; *Writing Research; Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the learning styles of young children, this position statement presents current research and information that document the need for developmentally appropriate reading experiences during the kindergarten and prekindergarten years. The paper contains the following sections: (1) a background statement, (2) current literacy research implications, (3) descriptions of developmentally appropriate and inappropriate kindergarten reading programs, (4) statements supported by recent literacy research, (5) questions frequently asked, (6) quotes from the Texas Education Agency, (7) implementing the new Texas "rules for curriculum," (8) "try this" (literacy experiences for children), and (9) references. (EL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED260379

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Janet Black

Margaret Puckett

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Affiliated With
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Southern Association for Children Under Six

Texas Association for the Education of Young Children

Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Reading Programs

A POSITION STATEMENT

Co-Sponsors Include: The Texas Elementary Kindergarten and Nursery Educators, The Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Texas Association of School Boards, Texas Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, Texas Association for Childhood Education, Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers.

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

Many early childhood education professionals in Texas have expressed concern about the increasing academic pressures on young children. This concern frequently centers upon formal reading instruction during the kindergarten year.

Presumably, parents, administrators, and teachers who support formal reading and pre-reading instruction during the kindergarten and pre-kindergarten years are well-intentioned. These persons realize the importance of the early years in the learning process. However, they incorrectly assume that young children learn in the same way as older children do.

There is a great need to educate many parents, teachers, and administrators about the unique learning style of young children. *This statement presents current research and information which documents the need for developmentally appropriate reading experiences during the kindergarten and pre-kindergarten years.*

CURRENT LITERACY RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Dorothy Strickland, Past-President of the International Reading Association, says "Currently, we are experiencing a period of exciting and highly productive research in the development of language and literacy. . . . It comes at a time when academic programs and materials are often at odds with what research tells us about how children become literate." (32)

William Teale suggests recent research has "prompted a reformulation of certain traditional beliefs about concepts such as reading readiness and about the types of preschool experiences which foster independent reading and writing abilities in the child." (35)

Description of a Developmentally *Appropriate* Kindergarten Reading Program

1. Young children learn through experiences that provide for all of the developmental needs — physical, socio-emotional, as well as intellectual.
2. Young children learn through self-selected activities while participating in a variety of centers which are interesting and meaningful to them. (Learning Centers include: socio-dramatic, block, science, math, manipulatives, listening, reading, writing, art, music, and construction.)
3. Young children are encouraged to talk about their experiences with other children and adults in the classroom.
4. Young children are involved in a variety of psychomotor experiences including, music, rhythms, movement, large and small motor manipulatives and outdoor activity.
5. Young children are provided with many opportunities to interact in meaningful print contexts: listening to stories, participating in shared book experiences, making language experience stories and books, developing key word vocabularies, reading classroom labels, and using print in the various learning centers.

Description of a Developmentally *Inappropriate* Kindergarten Reading Program

1. Formal kindergarten reading programs usually focus upon whole group instruction in visual-motor and phonics lessons with commercially prepared workbooks and ditto sheets.
2. Formal kindergarten reading programs usually include reading instruction in a basal reading series. This process frequently involves the learning of *rules* with emphasis upon the *form* rather than the *meaning* of written language.
3. A formal kindergarten reading program often requires children to sit for inappropriately long blocks of time in teacher directed activities with overemphasis upon table work and fine motor skills.
4. A formal kindergarten reading program focuses upon isolated skill oriented experiences which include repetition and memorization.

CS008121

"It is always important to consider whether or not a child's early introduction to academic work will strengthen his tendency to be a learner in the long run. After all, not much is gained if early instruction results in later dislike of school work. . . When a child begins academic work too soon, she may end up spending too much time without understanding what she is doing and so wind up feeling incompetent." — Lillian G. Katz, (1984)

Recent literacy research shows that:

1. **Children begin to learn to read and write quite early in their lives.**
(2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 31, 32, 33, 34)

   — Children as young as two recognize "Coke," "McDonald's," and "K-Mart."

   — Two and three-year-olds write. One child puts two dots on his paper and proudly announces, "That says my name." While in a restaurant, another child writes (in cursive like marks) and says to his mother, "That says we want ice cream."

Implication: Teachers, parents, and significant others in the lives of children need to be aware of the young child's early interest in reading and writing. Adults need to acknowledge and encourage this developing competency in literacy.

2. **Young children's reading and writing behavior is different from that of older children and adults. Young children work out logical but non-conventional solutions in their reading and writing.**
(2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35)

   — Young children in one stage of learning to read, read "Charley," "Chris," and "Charlotte," as "Charley." (They all begin with "Ch.")

   — Young children "invent" their spelling. "I lv u." (I love you.)

Implication: Teachers, parents, and significant others in the lives of young children should not impose adult standards of reading and writing upon young children. When young children learn to walk and talk, adults are supportive and encouraging. They do not correct or shame. Adults need to also support and encourage young children in their literacy development.

3. **Young children develop adult or conventional reading and writing behaviors over a period of years.**
(2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35)

   — Gradually, children discover that "Charley," "Chris" and "Charlotte" do not all say "Charley."

   — Over a period of time, they will change "I lv u" to "I love you."

Implication: Adults need to allow children time to develop competencies in reading and writing. Young children's approximations are developmentally appropriate behaviors. These approximations, over a period of time, develop into more conventional or adult-like reading and writing. Learning to read and write takes time just as learning to walk takes a period of many months and learning to talk takes a period of years.

4. **Research clearly demonstrates that young children are active constructors and not passive receivers of reading and writing knowledge.**
(2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35)

   — Five year old Joanie recognizes the word "tarantula" because she had a real-life experience with a tarantula, talked about it, drew about it, and wrote a story about it.

   — A kindergarten teacher asks Jason to find a word on his paper which begins with the "d" sound. Jason stares blankly into space. Such efforts on the part of the kindergarten teacher to introduce formal reading skills are frequently unsuccessful.

Implication: Adults need to provide children with the opportunities to actively use *their* developing knowledge about reading and writing. Isolated skill activities emphasize passive learning. Young children do not learn best in quiet, paper and pencil, teacher directed activities.

5. **Young children learn about reading and writing through participating in and observing literacy experiences that people use for real-life purposes.**
(2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34)

   — Eighteen-month-old Austin gets his mail (junk mail) every day when he and his mother go to the mail box.

   — Three-year-old Darcy makes her grocery list with her mother.

Implication: Young children need to have literacy experiences which are based on real-life activities with other persons in their world. Social interaction is important because it is what surrounds the reading and writing experience that makes literacy "take" in the child.

Photo by Jim Campbell

6. **Children learn about the form of written language through using it in meaningful contexts.**
(2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 31, 32, 33, 34)

— Five-year-old Charley informs Jay that "Chrissie" is not his name.

— Five-year-old Joanie can find the word "tarantula" in her 23-word story.

Implication: If children are provided with opportunities to write and read from a meaning perspective, knowledge about the form of written language will naturally emerge. Demanding that young children control all aspects of written language, such as correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling, overwhelms children when they attempt to write.

7. **Current research indicates that children need to have many varied oral language experiences in the classroom if they are to develop into competent readers and writers.**
(10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35)

— Six-year-old Kate has no problem learning to read formally in the first grade classroom. Her play experience in the dress-up corner of the kindergarten classroom has helped her internalize that plots have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

— Seven-year-old Letitia writes a story that is understood by her audience. Her experience in the kindergarten year in learning to tell all the background information during sharing time carries over into her writing behavior in the early elementary school years.

Implication: Opportunities must be provided for children to use narrative language, role play familiar stories, act out play episodes in centers, and tell whole stories in sequence.

8. **Research tells us that virtually all children come to school with knowledge about reading and writing. However, this knowledge may vary from child to child.**
(13, 14, 33, 35)

— Five-year-old Holly is the only child of university professors. There is a wide variety of reading and writing materials and experiences in her home.

— Five-year-old James comes from a large family with limited reading abilities and experiences. He can read many familiar products and logos. Books, however, are a new experience to him.

Implication: Teachers need to observe children to discover their particular literacy needs. Then, teachers need to provide opportunities for children to develop broader competence in reading and writing.

Photo by Jim Campbell

"We certainly do not want to promote writing by structuring writing lessons centered on practicing letter form or copying sentences — such lessons do not match young children's way of learning. Rather we need to weave print, and opportunities for its use, throughout the school environment." — Anne Haas Dyson, (1985), forthcoming. Writing: A basic for young children. *Dimensions.*

9. **Research tells us that encouraging children to write in order to communicate helps them organize their thoughts and precedes the reading process.**
(2, 5, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 32, 34)

— Five-year-old Maria has learned through her writing that there are spaces between words.

— Five-year-old Juan knows that print moves from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom of the page.

Implication: Teachers and parents need to encourage young children to do their own drawing and writing. Labeling drawings, writing stories, copying words, and compiling lists are some ways teachers and parents can encourage children to write.

10. **Research tells us that literature plays an important part in helping children develop into competent readers and writers.**
(3, 8, 19, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35)

— Four-year-old Sing requests the aide in the classroom to read the *Cat in the Hat* over and over. Later, Sing begins to "read" the story himself.

— Five-year-old Tai uses the pattern in *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* to make her book, *Yellow Dog, Yellow Dog, What Do You Hear?*

Implication: Teachers and parents need to read to children every day. Very young children need to hear oral language in order to learn to speak. Children need to hear written language so they can learn to read and write.

Questions frequently asked.

There is no longitudinal research related to kindergarten children who have been pressured into developmentally inappropriate kindergarten reading programs. Questions frequently asked include:

1. *What attitudes and concepts about reading are developed in children who are unsuccessful and frustrated by the inappropriate approaches of reading instruction?*

   There is some research which suggests that positive attitudes in early reading experience effect later success in reading. (1, 3, 11, 16, 24).

2. *How can young children develop the necessary background of experience which ensures understanding of reading if they spend much of their school day in formal (symbolic and abstract) learning activities?*

   Research evidence suggests that rich informational background and an understanding of what written language does are necessary if young children are to understand the stories in basal readers. (12, 14, 15, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32)

3. *If young children are forced to attend to the form aspects of reading which is prevalent in formal basal reader approaches (phonics rules, vowel sounds, reading without any mistakes, etc.) rather than meaning, how will this affect later comprehension and understanding?*

   Comprehension and understanding are very important skills as children encounter more and more content information in the elementary grades. Failure to learn to understand print can have disastrous effects upon later learning, test performance, and test scores.

Photo by Jim Campbell

IMPLEMENTING "RULES FOR CURRICULUM"

Chapter 75 (House Bill 246)

The new "Rules for Curriculum" (Chapter 75), have been passed by the Texas Board of Education and implementation for many of the requirements will begin during the 1984-85 school year. These rules establish minimum time periods for subjects taught in each grade level. In addition, essential elements are identified for each subject taught in each grade level. These rules apply to all public and accredited private schools in Texas.

Space precludes a listing and discussion of the essential elements for each of the Kindergarten subject areas. However, the Texas Education Agency has published a document entitled, *State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum: Principles, Standards and Procedures for Accreditation of School Districts.*

The instructional time allocations for kindergarten subjects are as follows:

English/Language Arts	40% of day
Mathematics	20% of day
Physical Education	daily
Fine Arts	weekly
Health	weekly
Science	weekly
Social Studies	weekly

These time allocations are the same whether applied to a half-day or full day kindergarten program.

Educators stress the need for careful interpretation of these instructional time allocations. The time allotments, 40% of the day for English/Language Arts and 20% of the day for math instruction, must be placed into a classroom management context which emphasizes developmentally appropriate instruction.

These time allotments must *not* be construed to mean that five year old children will be required to sit and be instructed by a teacher in reading and math for 60% of the school day!

Indeed, developmentally appropriate curricular arrangements probably devote 60% and *more* of the day to language arts and math, but it is done through a variety of contexts, a variety of learning centers and instruction occurs throughout the school day.

Language arts instruction, for instance, includes a multiplicity of activities in which children may work independently or in small groups. Materials provided include manipulatives, books, games, and realia which promote hands-on concrete experiences. These experiences are essential in early stages of cognitive development. A few examples of instruction which occurs in a variety of contexts and learning centers throughout the school day, are: labels, environmental print of many types; rebus charts, stories and activity directions; child authored stories, poems and books; key vocabulary cards and supplies; and story pictures and story starters. Telling, retelling and dramatizing familiar stories and poems in a variety of ways utilizing puppetry, costumes, flannel board, child art, and many other devices, do, indeed, constitute effective use of instructional time.

These elements of developmentally appropriate early childhood language arts instruction must not be minimized or superceded by inappropriate attempts to teach formal reading programs for extended periods of time each day.

continued on page 5

QUOTES FROM THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

TEA Guidelines for Selection of Kindergarten Materials

"The learning experiences described. . . are designed for kindergarten children, not for first grade pupils. Activities are designed to be taught mainly through oral communication, observation, and maximum involvement of the children either through physical action or verbal response, rather than too much reliance on paper/pencil tasks."

"Kindergarten Education: Kindergarten Textbook Materials (Commencing September 1982)," Texas Education Agency/Division of Curriculum Development/Kindergarten Education, 1981.

IMPLEMENTING "RULES FOR CURRICULUM"
continued from page 4

These same principles must be applied to the mathematics program. Again, the opportunities for a child to engage in concrete/hands-on experiences using a variety of manipulatives are limitless. Careful selection and sequenced use of developmentally appropriate, concrete materials and activities are essential. The use of these materials by individuals or small groups can occur throughout the school day, and can be integrated into other subject areas. Examples of such instruction include: cooking by rebus charts; counting, anything!; numbering, anything!; prescriptive use of unit blocks; following simple science experiments which utilize math concepts; and a variety of everyday uses of the clock, money, measuring and weighing devices.

Were an early childhood teacher to exhaust the many avenues for extending and enriching language arts and math instruction, and integrating that instruction into each of the learning centers, including housekeeping, blocks, science, social studies and others, the instructional time would extend well beyond that which has been proposed. Efforts to implement the requirements of Chapter 75 must be accountable to its intent to insure a quality education during the kindergarten year. To do so, is to employ sound teaching methodology and to use pupil time wisely in a program which is designed to be developmentally appropriate for children of kindergarten age.

QUOTES:

"Wepmann (1960) found that most youngsters could not differentiate among all the consonant sounds until they were seven years of age. Yet most children learn to read before this age, which demonstrates that reading is not a sounding out process but a meaning-gaining procedure. Reading programs that require children to learn the sound of language before reading words do not follow the research." — Fox, S. & Allen V. (1983). *The Language arts: An integrated approach,* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Between the ages of four and six, children need many and varied concrete experiences. These concrete experiences are crucial for optimum brain growth. — Sinatra, R. (1983). Brain research sheds light on language learning. *Educational Leadership, 40,* (8), 9-12.

Children need to become literate, not linguists. They do this by using oral and written language for real life purposes, not by analyzing and memorizing the forms of language.

For additional information contact:

Janet K. Black
2125 Fairfax
Denton, TX 76205

or

Margaret Puckett
3732 Fenton Place
Fort Worth, TX 76133

Co-chairpersons, TAEYC ad hoc Commitee on Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Reading Programs.

Other members of the committee:
Anne Haws, Educational Consultant, Region X Service Center
Kay Moberg, Kindergarten Teacher, Fort Worth ISD
Libby Vernon, Principal, Richardson ISD

The Texas Association for the Education of Young Children Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Programs may be reproduced with credit to TAEYC and the authors: Janet Black, Margaret Puckett, Anne Haws, Kay Moberg, Libby Vernon.

TRY THIS —

1. Say these letters out loud to a friend:
   P D A Q S M D Y B T X C J
   See how many your friend can remember.
2. Now, say these words to your friend:
   boy, car, run, see, sun, food, green, phone, hop, the, pencil, by, old
   See how many words your friend can remember.
3. Now read this sentence to your friend: I hope it does not start raining before the picnic is over.
   See if your friend can remember the sentence.

Your friend probably remembered a few letters, a few more words, but had no difficulty remembering the sentence. The sentence had meaning and was easily *understood, comprehended,* and *remembered.*

Literacy experiences for young children have to be meaningful to them if they are to be understood, comprehended, and remembered.

REFERENCES

1. Bailey, M.H., Durkin, D., Nurss, J.R. & Stammer, J.D. (1982). Preparation of kindergarten teachers for reading instruction. *The Reading Teacher, 36,* 307-311.
2. Bissex, G.L. (1980). *GYNS AT WRK: A child learns to write and read.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
3. Black, J.K. (1984). Beginning teachers and beginning readers. In Baumann, J. F. & Johnson, D.D. (Eds.), *Reading instruction and the beginning teacher.* Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company.
4. Black, J.K. (1980). Those "mistakes" tell us a lot. *Language Arts, 47,* (5), 508-513.
5. Clay, M.M. (1975). *What did I write?* Aukland: Heinemann Educational Books.
6. Clay, M.M. (1979). *Reading: The patterning of complex behavior.* (2nd ed.). Auckland: Heinemann Educational Books.
7. Clay, M.M. (1982). *Observing young readers.* Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.
8. Durkin, D. (1966). *Children who read early.* New York: Teachers College Press.
9. Dyson, A. Haas. (1982). The emergence of visible language: Interrelationships between drawing and early writing. *Visible Language, 16,* (4), 360-381.
10. Dyson, A. Haas. (1983). The role of oral language in the early writing processes. *Research in the Teaching of English. 17,* (1), 1-30.
11. Elkind, D. (1981). *The hurried child: growing up too fast, too soon.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Incorporated.
12. Fein, G. (1979). Play and the acquisition of symbols. In Katz, L.G. (Ed.), *Current Topics in Early Childhood Education,* Vol. 2. Norwood N.J.: Ablex Publishing Company.
13. Ferreiro, E. (Teberosky, A. (1982). *Literacy before schooling.* Exeter, NH: Heinemann.
14. Genishi, D. & Dyson, A.H. (1984) *Language assessment in the early years.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company.
15. Goodman, Y.M. (1980). *The roots of literacy.* Claremont Reading Conference Forty-Fourth Yearbook.
16. Groff, P.J. (1962). Children's attitude toward reading and their critical type material. *Journal of Educational Research, 55,* (7), 313-334.
17. Gundlach, R.A. (1982). Children as writers: The beginnings of learning to write. In Nystrand, M. (ed.). *What writers know: The language and structure of written discourse.* New York: Academic Press.
18. Harste, J.C., Burke, C.L., & Woodward, V. (1983). *The young child as writer-reader, and informant.* Final report, N.I.E. Grant 80-0121. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University.
19. Holdaway, D. (1979). *The foundations of literacy.* Sydney: Ashton Scholastic.
20. King, M.L. (Rental, V.M. (1981). *How children learn to write: A longitudinal study.* Final Report, N.I.E. Grant 79-0137 and 79-0039. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University.
21. Luria, A.R. (1983). The development of writing in the child. English translation reprinted in Martlew, M. (Ed.), *The psychology of written language: Developmental and educational perspective.* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
22. Manning, M. & Manning, G. (1981). The school's assault on childhood. *Childhood Education, 58-59,* 84-87.
23. Michaels, S. (1981). Sharing time: Children's narrative styles and access to literacy. *Language in Society, 10,* 423-442.
24. Newman, R.E. (1966). The kindergarten read-controversy. *Elementary English, 43,* (3), 235-239.
25. Pellegrini, A. (1984) The effects of dramatic play on children's generation of cohesive text. *Discourse Process.*
26. Pellegrini, A. (1982). The construction of cohesive text by preschoolers in play contexts. *Discourse Process, 5,* 101-108.
27. Pellegrini, A. & Galda, L. (1982). The effect of thematic-fantasy play training on the development of children's story comprehension *American Educational Research Journal, 19,* 443-452.
28. Read, C. (1975). Lessons to be learned from the preschool orthographer. In Lenneberg, E.h. & Lenneberg, E. (Eds.), *Foundations of language development: A multidisciplinary approach.* Vol. 2. New York: Academic Press.
29. Rhodes, L. (1981). I can read: predictable books as resources for reading and writing activities. *The Reading Teacher, 34, (5)* 511-518.
30. Sachs, J., Goldman, J., & Chaille, C. (1984). Planning in pretend play: Using language to coordinate narrative development. In Pellegrini, A. & Yawkey, T. (Eds.), *The development of oral and written language in social contexts.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company.
31. Schickedanz, J.A. (1978). "You be the doctor and I'll be sick": Preschoolers learn the language arts through play. *Language Arts, 55,* 714-718.
32. Strickland, Dorothy. (1983). Forward: *Family literacy: Young children learning to read and write* by Denny Taylor. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.
33. Sulzby, E. (1982). Oral and written model adaptations in stories by kindergarten children. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 14,* 51-59.
34. Taylor, D. (1983) *Family literacy: Young children learning to read and write.* Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.
35. Teale, William. (1985, forthcoming). The beginnings of literacy. *Dimensions.*
36. Teale, W. H. & Sulzby, E. (Eds.) (in press). *Emergent literacy: Writing and reading.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company.
37. Ventriglia, L. (1982). *Lessons of Miguel and Maria: How children learn a second language.* Rowley, MA: Addison, Wesley.

Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
Janet Black
College of Education
North Texas State University
Denton, Texas 76203

Affiliated With
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Southern Association for Children Under Six